

Message Text

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TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 030744

EXDIS

FOL REPEAT OF MADRID 936 TO SECSTATE FEB 10

QTE:

S E C R E T MADRID 936

EXDIS

DEPT PLS PASS USUN NEW YORK, AND AMEMBASSY RABAT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, SP, MO

SUBJ: MOROCCAN CLAIMS TO CEUTA AND MELILLA

REF: (A) STATE 027758 (B) 029299

1. AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY BRIEFED

UNDERSECRETARY

OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ROVIRA ON THE US POSITION ON CEUTA

AND MELILLA ON SATURDAY FEB 9. I BRIEFED FOREIGN

MINISTER CORTINA ON MONDAY, FEB 10 AT 1:30 P.M. MADRID

TIME. AFTER I HAD CONVEYED TO HIM THE U.S. POSITION

STATED IN PARA TWO REFTEL (A), HE THANKED ME

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AND SAID THIS POSITION WAS EVIDENCE OF BOTH U.S. FRIENDSHIP AND IMPARTIALITY. HE THEN TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOME 35 MINUTES TO GIVE ME THE SPANISH VIEW OF THE HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS OF BOTH THE CEUTA AND MELILLA AND THE SAHARA ISSUES. THE MAIN POINTS HE MADE WERE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) CEUTA AND MELILLA HAVE BEEN A PART OF SPAIN SINCE BEFORE SPAIN WAS SPAIN, GOING BACK TO BEFORE THE VISIGOTHS. SPAIN HAD NO ADVANCE ADVICE OF WHAT MOROCCO WAS GOING TO DO. SPAIN'S POSITION WHICH WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO THE UN IS ESSENTIALLY THAT WHICH WAS PRESENTED IN ITS PRESS STATEMENT RELEASED ON SATURDAY (REPORTED IN EMBTEL 932).

(B) SPAIN IS PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE ON THE SAHARA, BUT WILL NOT DO SO WITHOUT TAKING INTO DUE ACCOUNT BOTH THE INTERESTS OF THE SAHARAN POPULATION AND THE INTERESTS OF ALGERIA AND MAURITANIA. AS WE PROBABLY KNOW FROM OUR EMBASSY IN ALGERIA, ALGERIA IS CONCERNED ABOUT STABILITY IN THE AREA AND BELIEVES THAT STABILITY CAN ONLY BE ASSURED BY GIVING THE SAHARAN POPULATION A CHANCE TO EXPRESS ITS WISHES AND THEN TAKING THOSE WISHES INTO ACCOUNT. SPAIN BELIEVES THE SAME. MAURITANIA HAS BEEN AMBIGUOUS, BUT IT PROBABLY REALLY AGREES WITH THIS POSITION BECAUSE IT WOULD NOT WANT A COMMON FRONTIER WITH MOROCCO. SPAIN DOES NOT WISH TO ENTER INTO PURELY BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOROCCO BECAUSE IT WISHES TO BE SURE THAT THE INTERESTS OF THE OTHER CONCERNED PARTIES ARE TAKEN DULY INTO ACCOUNT. BUT SPAIN IS PREPARED AT ANY TIME TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOROCCO THAT INCLUDE, THROUGH ONE FORMULA OR ANOTHER, BOTH ALGERIA AND MAURITANIA.

(C) SPAIN IS BOTHERED BY MOROCCO'S UNRELIABILITY IN TALKS ON THE SAHARA. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE CITED THE FOLLOWING. SPAIN INFORMED MOROCCO BEFORE THE FINAL VOTE IN THE UN THAT IT WOULD ABSTAIN, RATHER THAN VOTE AGAINST THE UN RESOLUTION REFERRING THE SAHARA ISSUE TO THE ICJ. THERE WAS THEN AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN SPAIN AND MOROCCO THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FINAL POLEMICS IN THE UN, BUT MOROCCO BROKE THAT AGREEMENT AND SPAIN HAD TO RESPOND

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TO DEFEND ITSELF.

(D) WE SHOULD FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT SPAIN HAS MADE THE POLITICAL DECISION TO LEAVE THE SAHARA EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF PULLING OUT ALL OF ITS TROOPS. IT WOULD HOPE TO GET SOME RETURN ON ITS ECONOMIC INVESTMENT, BUT THIS IS NOT A PRIOR CONDITION. IT WOULD BE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE FOR THAT RETURN WITH A

SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT OF SAHARA. WHEN I COMMENTED THAT THE REMOVAL OF SPANISH FORCES FROM THE SAHARA WOULD LEAVE A VACUUM WHICH WOULD INVITE CONFLICT AMONG INTERESTED PARTIES UNLESS THERE WERE A PRIOR ACCORD AMONG THEM ON THE STATUS OF THE SAHARA, CORTINA SAID THAT WAS EXACTLY THE POINT AND PRECISELY WHY SPAIN WANTED TO ACHIEVE A RESULT AGREED TO BY ALL FOUR COUNTRIES MAINLY CONCERNED. HE SAID THAT SUCH AN ACCORD COULD OCCUR EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER A REFERENDUM IN THE SAHARA BUT IN EITHER EVENT IT WOULD HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IN SOME WAY THE INTERESTS OF THE SAHARAN POPULATION. HE CONCLUDED THIS PART OF OUR CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT ALL SPAIN WOULD LIKE FROM THE UNITED STATES WAS REPRESENTATIONS HELPFUL TO THE ACHIEVING OF SUCH AN ACCORD, AND BY AGAIN EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR THE POSITION WE WERE TAKING ON CEUTA AND MELILLA.
EATON UNQTE INGERSOLL

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